



United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service

Southeast Region

Reply to

Attn. of: SERO Policy

January 8, 2003

Subject: Policy 210.10-33, 220.8-03, and 226.20-27: Baby Fruits or Vegetables with DHA

To: All State Directors

Child Nutrition Programs (CNP)

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

Southeast Region

This memorandum is in response to a number of inquiries we have received regarding the use of baby foods containing DHA for infant meals. We wish to clarify that certain baby food products containing DHA cannot be served to infants as part of a reimbursable meal in the child nutrition programs. DHA is an omega-3 fatty acid known as docosahexaenoic acid, that occurs naturally in breast milk and other foods, and is known to support an infant's mental and visual development. DHA may be added to commercially prepared infant fruits or vegetables and infant formula.

The source of DHA in some lines of baby food products, such as Beech-Nut First Advantage Sweet Potato Soufflé or Tropical Blend, is egg yolk. These DHA-added products combine fruits and vegetables with dried egg yolk, heavy cream, rice flour, vanilla extract, and other ingredients. They are not labeled or marketed as desserts, but they contain similar ingredients that may not be appropriate for an infant younger than 8 months of age. Introducing these "dessert-like" ingredients into an infant's diet at an earlier age could result in a food sensitivity or food allergy.

Although DHA-added products cannot contribute to the infant meal pattern, they may be served as additional foods to infants 8 months of age or older. However, since they contain several ingredients, additives or extenders that could cause allergic reactions, we recommend that the center, the provider, or the school check with the infant's parent or guardian, before serving them.

All State CNP, CACFP, SFSP Directors

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Should you have any questions concerning this matter please contact this office.

CHARLIE SIMMONS
Regional Director
Special Nutrition Programs